Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). India had also expressed its opposition to Article XIV on "entry into force", which was introduced after India's opposition to CTBT was made known, on the grounds that these provisions are contrary to international legal norm and seek to constrain India's sovereign right of decision making. After the nuclear tests on 11 and 13 may, 1998 at Pokharan, Government have signalled a willingness to consider adhering to some of the undertaking of the CTBT but not in a political vacuum and depending upon reciprocal responses.

(b) Ex-Prime Minister Shri I.K. Gujaral in an interview with the Indian Express (New Delhi), dated May 18, 1998, stated that "We should now be willing to sit with the Permanent Five and discuss how to make the treaty comprehensive and non-discriminatory".

(c) and (d) No, Sir. discussions on the reforms in the United Nations and the expansion of the UN Security Council are still on-going among member states of the United nations, and there is no agreement as yet on candidates or criteria for expansion of the Security Council.

Political Lobbying for Economic Sanctions Against Pakistan

940. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government would be mobilizing political opinion to pressurise the US Government to list Islamabad as an international sponsor of terrorism now that the US State Department has once again acknowledged that reports of official Pakistani support to Kashmiri terrorists are credible;

(b) if so, whether political lobbying has been initiated towards achieving this objective so that US could slap economic sanctions against Pakistan; and

(c) what steps are proposed to be taken on a long-term basis to monitor such a situation so that continued efforts are made in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) and (b) The recently released US State Department's Annual Report on "Patterns of Global Terrorism, 1997" has once again made reference to "credible reports of official Pakistani support" to militant groups that engage in terrorism. The Government has drawn the attention of the United States and other countries at the bilateral level and multilateral fora, to the issue of Pakistan sponsored terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir and other parts of India.

The Government of the United States of America has on several occassions reiterated that they are committed to international cooperation to eradicate terrorism. The United States has designated the Pakistan based harkat-Ul-Ansar as a terrorist organisation under its domestic laws.

(c) Government continues to maintain its vigil and is taking all necessary steps to combat cross border terrorism.

Panel of Local Lawyers with Indian Embassies in Gulf Countries

941. SHRI SANJAY DALMIA:
DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR:
DR. MOHAN BABU:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian Embassies in Gulf Countries have a panel of local lawyers for legal consultation and other legal matters;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Indians abroad and NRIs are given assistance of such lawyers for their personal and other matters;

(d) whether Indian Embassy in Kuwait has a proposal to give such assistance to NRIs to Kuwait; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) to (e) Many of Indian mission in the Gulf do not maintain panels of local lawyers. Given the variety of possible disputes, several Missions feel that maintaining a panel of lawyers may not serve any useful purpose. However, Indian nationals abroad are provided guidance and assistance by Missions; where legal advice/assistance becomes necessary, our embassies refer Indian nationals to prominent local lawyers.

Professionally qualified members of the Indian community in the Gulf having legal difficulties are generally able to afford the legal fees and pursue their cases in local courts, whenever required. In most Gulf countries, however, judicial processes in labour cases are inform and quick and services of professional lawyers are not required. In such cases, our Embassies provide the service of interpreters and officials from the Labour Section of the Embassy who assist the labourers in representing their cases before the courts.

The Embassy of India in Kuwait provides assistance to NRIs in Kuwait and, where necessary, refers them to local lawyers for seeking expert legal opinion/ assistance.

Hiring of Accommodation for Haj Pilgrims in Madina

942. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received complaint regarding hiring of accommodation for Indian Haj Pilgrims in Madina;

(b) whether levy of penalty was recommended against contractor of accommodation at Madina;

(c) if so, what is the penalty recommended by Indian Embassy; and

(d) whether penlty was levied, if so, how much?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House. *(See below)*

Statement

The accommodation arrangements in Madinah are different from those in Makkah in that a pilgrim spends a maximum of eight days in Madinah as against three weeks in Makkah. Accordingly, in Madinah the building contractors utilise their buildings to accommodate four to five sets of pilgrims. Hence, in order to implement this arrangements, pilgrims have to move into and out of Madinah strictly as per the prescribed travel schedules.

During Haj 97, there has been complaints that in Madinah some Indian pilgrims had been accommodated beyond the distance limits provided for in the accommodation contract with the building contractor, as a result of which the Consulate General of India, Jeddah had recommended a fine on the contractor. However, when this matter was examined in greater details, it was found that the pilgrims had not moved to Madinah as per the prescribed travel schedule, due to which the accommodation arrangements of the contractor had got disputed: while in some instances, the units set aside by him for Indian pilgrims had remained unutilised, on other occasions more pilgrims arrived in Madinah than had been anticipated. Hence, he had no choice but to accommodate such pilgrims in buildings at distances beyond the prescribed limits. Accordingly, it was